

Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.



Dave Freudenthal, Governor
John Etchepare, Director

August 20, 2008

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
James V. Johnson
Mail Stop #2100
245 Murray Lane, SW Building 410
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) regarding the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility Draft Environmental Impact Statement (NBAF DEIS).

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal has major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, it's important that we be kept informed of proposed actions and decisions and that we continue to be provided the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

We have reviewed the NBAF DEIS for no action as well as the construction and operation at one of the six alternative sites: 1) South Milledge Avenue Site, Athens, Georgia; 2) Manhattan Campus Site, Manhattan, Kansas; 3) Flora Industrial Park Site, Flora, Mississippi; 4) Plum Island Site, Plum Island, New York; 5) Umstead Research Farm Site, Butner, North Carolina; and 6) Texas Research Park Site, San Antonio, Texas.

We support continuing research on foreign animal diseases for not only the negative impacts on American agriculture, but also for the health and safety of American citizens. The Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC) is the current location for research on foreign animal diseases. It is our understanding there are no known cases of released contaminants or diseases from the PIADC, most likely due to the isolation of the Plum Island facility.

The WDA strongly supports and encourages the U.S. Department of Homeland Security select Alternative Number 4, Plum Island Site, Plum Island, New York. The current location of the PIADC is successful in retaining harmful diseases with little to no ability for livestock or wildlife to reach its shores. No other alternative site has this natural barrier. Additionally the close proximity of Plum Island to Long Island is ideal for continuing to bring in high caliber researchers. Many researchers may want the close proximity to metropolitan amenities and cultural diversity other locations simply may not provide.

After comparing the environmental effects on Table ES-3 of the Executive Summary on the six alternatives, there is simply no single site that stands clearly above and beyond the others. We

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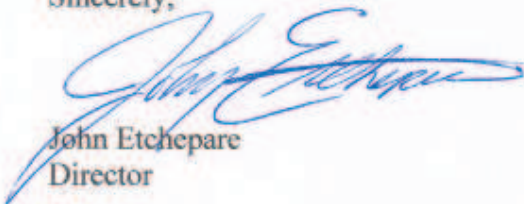
National Bio and Agro Defense Facility

Page 2

have reviewed the preliminary costs of the NBAF alternatives and understand the Plumb Island site is the most expensive of the six alternatives. If we understand this correctly, this is due to removal of the old research facility in addition to the construction of the new site. Despite this increase in cost, we continue to support the Plumb Island site due to the isolation for contaminants and disease as well as the proven track record to employ and house staff in the Long Island, New York area.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and look forward hearing more about the construction and operation of the new facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Etchepare", is written over a printed name and title.

John Etchepare
Director

JE/jw

Cc: Governor's Planning Office
WDA Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
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